# SUNDAY OBSERVANCE,

## SUPERSTITION AND UNBELIEF.

## With a Reply to "Onlooker."

BY F. J. PEEL.

Toronto:
PRINTED BY C. M. ELLIS, 67 ADELAIDE STREET WEST.

1896.

# Sunday Observance,

## SUPERSTITION AND UNBELIEF.

BY F. J. PEEL.

THIS, though perhaps not the most pleasing way of expressing a few opinions and stating a few facts, is the only means within reach, and, therefore, I have availed myself of it. I have long felt that some one ought to tell the truth about Sunday; why its observance is inconsistent with history and nature. (Politicians dare not, they would lose their popularity; ministers will not; editors dare not, their circulation would be affected; professors would lose their positions; society men would lose caste, merchants their trade.) I have summoned up sufficient courage to attempt it myself; whether to any purpose or not, the future will disclose. I wish to discuss more particularly the advisability of opening the public reading room on Sundays, instituting a Sunday street car service during the coming summer, and opening the park or parks reached by the same. In perusing the world's literature, one cannot but notice the diversity, the continual change of ideas, the evolution of public opinion. If we look back to the belief of the ancients,—to the time when it was thought that the sun moved; that the stars were "specks" hung in the sky, for man's special benefit; that the earth was flat,—and follow the revelations of science down to the discovery of the very opposite: that worlds are circling retinues of suns, that man was evolved from lower organizations; if we go back in the mechanical arts, to the engines of Savery, Newcome and Watt, pieces of mechanism that stood about ten feet high and six or eight feet square, which ran ten revolutions a minute, and developed twenty horse-power, and follow the changes in design down to the present, down to the creation of DeLaval's steam turbine, a combination which can be carried under the arm, which runs at a speed of twenty thousand revolutions a minute and develops the same (20) horse-power; if we trace the workings of evolution in religious circles,—if we go back in history to the time when the belief in the efficacy of the stake and the belief in eternal punishment were almost universal in the Christian world, and follow the flight of man's brain or his thought down to the present, a state wherein, we will say, one-half of the Christian world have come to the conclusion that Hades is a myth, and about

one-half of the remainder have practically discarded creeds.—we note a change from asceticism to the enjoyment of liberty and life, to more or less toleration and good will. And we cannot fail to perceive the ceaseless action of evolution in every department of life. The continual changing of ideas, some as queer as "the shifting glories of the shimmering opal," presents a picture to the mind at once interesting and instructive. Truly, "the world do move."

Fifty years ago, to propose that public reading rooms be opened on Sunday would mean ostracism from all social pleasures; would mean the fanning into existence of flames of hatred and persecution; to-day, almost every library in the cities of the United States, England, France and Germany is open on Sunday; to-day, in the city of Hamilton, Sunday street cars are patronized by all classes in the community, from the happy little boot-blacks to the pompous bishop. About twenty-three years ago the public libraries of Boston, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia were opened for the first time to the working man on Sunday. The average Sunday attendance during the first year in one was seven hundred, in another over eleven hundred. Our newspaper men, school teachers, clergymen, lawyers, and all others who are blessed with private libraries and an abundance of papers and periodicals, make free use of them on Sunday. Why take away from others less fortunate the public literature on their only day of leisure? Those who possess flower gardens, lawns and shrubbery, are aware of the pleasures within their reach, and find them to be an inspiration and a delight on the first day of the week. Is it impracticable for the city to co-operate with the Brantford Street Railway Company (Mohawk Park) and the Ontario Government (grounds of the Institute for the Blind) and with a little landscape gardening make these wildernesses into paradises of flowers and shrubbery,—two parks, one at each extreme of the city? Let us have a little less church exemption, less bonusing of proposed railroads, which (once decided upon by the projectors that they would pay) generally go through whether bonused or not, and a little more city improvement of the right kind. Those who possess private conveyances may be seen Sundays on the streets of the city or on country roads enjoying the ever-changing panorama of view. Why stall the public horse in the street car barn? And why so, especially when the radial railways come into existence? Is it selfishness; that which destroys every inclination towards generous action, every inclination towards true nobility of character? Is it thoughtlessness, or a mistaken sense of propriety, which prohibits all elevating pleasure on Sunday? Action is life; action of mind and body is health. Physiologically, man does not require rest during wakefulness, unless from undue exertion. The average worker, who absolutely rests mind and body all day Sunday, is generally as tired on Monday morning as on Saturday evening. Inaction begets a feeling of lassitude, which perhaps has occasioned more than once the remark, "This is blue Monday." What all require at short intervals is a change of occupation, of scene, of

environment. Capacities for enjoyment differ ; those of the office, the study, the counting house, the pulpit, the accountants, book-keepers, clerks, who stand or sit six days a week, adding up columns or turning over leaves, require the work of exercise, need fresh air and sunshine. The worker amid the dust and heat of mechanical activity, needs a change of action from the muscles to the senses. If he wishes to take a jaunt on the cars, to spend an hour or two in the reading room, or to enjoy a romp in the park with his little ones, he is prohibited by law from doing so. If it is lawful to deprive the minority of that which is considered healthful pleasure, six days in the week ; if it is lawful to deprive any of the privilege of worship at any place, at any time, or in any way, it is legalized tyranny, and should not be tolerated by a justice-loving community.

Many of those who wish to participate in the enjoyments of a rational Sunday have as much or the spirit of worship within them, perhaps more of it, than those who would compel all to follow the dictates of another's conscience. Freedom of speech, liberty of thought and conscience, have come to us from a blood-stained, turbulent past. Liberty of action, which is but an extension of thought and conscience, is not yet a reality in some parts of the globe ; but in so far as it does not interfere with the liberties and pleasures of others and is not detrimental to life or health it should be as free as the air and the birds. In the words of John Stuart Mill, "Mankind could be no more justified in silencing the opinion of one person than that person, had he power, would be justified in silencing the opinion of mankind." We say the same truth may be applied to action. If, after thought, any one conscientiously, honestly, comes to the conclusion that it is his well-being to indulge in pastimes that are prohibited on Sunday, lives there a man who loves truth, justice, magnanimity, freedom, honor, benevolence, wisdom, temperance, industry, fortitude, love, who would be so rude, so forgetful of true courtesy and manhood, as to say, "Thou shalt not." It is told of Max O'Rell, the well-known French lecturer, that while travelling in England, he happened into a church one Sunday morning, in one of the rural districts. The sermon was a very vivid description of the horrors of a Parisian Sunday, of the gambling dens, of the races, of the dissipations of a wicked city. At the close of the sermon, Max O'Rell was asked to say a few words, and during the course of his remarks he said :

"The sermon which you have just listened to has described something which I have never seen in Paris on Sunday, for the very simple reason that I never looked for it. Let me tell you, however, what I have seen ; I have gone into the public libraries, and watched thousands of eager readers absorbing knowledge ; I have gone to the museums, where the curious are ever found ; I have sauntered into the art galleries where men, women, and children, with pleasure and delight written on their faces, were enjoying their only day of leisure ; into the parks, the flower gardens, have I gone, where fountains were playing, and care

worn humanity were listening to the symphonies of music and enjoying the beauties of day : but I have never seen that which has just been described to you, in Paris on Sunday."

In scientific, literary, social, and religious circles, many have spoken against the injustice of Sunday laws : Tyndall, Spencer, Huxley, Bishops Spalding and Potter, Revs. Dr. Guthrie and Norman McLeod (Scotch Presbyterians), Rev. O. A. Bradford, W. A. Gifford, W. Armstrong, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Clara M. Bisbee, B. O. Flower, the eloquent editor of the *Arena* Magazine, D. K. Tenny, H. M. Taber, and many others, may be mentioned. Probably very few Christians are aware of the fact that what they call the Christian Sabbath is of pagan origin. I give herewith a few quotations :

President Andrews, of Brown University, says : " There was no observance of Sunday till down to the time of Constantine." Constantine in the year A.D. 321 issued an edict (not requiring its religious observance, but simply abstinence from work), reading : " Let all the people rest, and all the various trades be suspended on the venerable day of the sun." (Justinian Code, bk. 3, title 12.] At the time of the issue of this edict Constantine was a sun-worshipper.

Dean Stanley says : " Our present legal institution was appointed by Constantine's authority, but not as a Christian Sabbath."

Rev. E. H. Johnston says : " All the great exegetes deny that the fourth commandment covers the Lord's day."

Rev. B. B. Taylor says : " In the first place, the fourth commandment refers to the seventh day (Saturday), not the first day (Sunday), as the Sabbath day ; in the second place, it was never binding upon anybody but the Jews ; in the third place, the Decalogue was abolished by Christ."

Principal Cunningham, of Edinburgh, says : " It is a sin to keep the museums and art galleries closed on Sunday." " Farmers are fooling not to take advantage of a fine day to take in their crops."

Macaulay, the historian, said : " The Puritans opposed bear-baiting on Sunday, not because it gave pain to the bears, but because it gave pleasure to the people."

The late Rev. Dr. Guthrie, of Edinburgh, said : " We counted on one occasion in Paris thirty-three places of amusement open on Sunday, but in one hour we saw in London and Edinburgh, with all their churches and schools and piety, more drunkenness than we saw in five long months in ' guilty ' Paris."

The Rev. Norman Macleod, another Scotch clergyman, says that, " in proportion to the strict enforcement of Sabbatarianism, there would be multiplied those practical inconsistencies, dishonesties, and pharisaical sophistries which prove in all ages supremely detrimental to morality and religion."

Prof. Tyndall also quotes the following testimony : " Puritanism, with its uncompromising demands, has had a sway of three centuries in Scotland, and yet, at this moment, the most frightful feature in Scotland is

the loathsome squalor and heathenism of its large towns. The combination of brutal iniquity and filth, absence of self-respect, and intemperance, visible daily in the meaner class of streets of Edinburgh and Glasgow, fills every traveller with surprise and horror."

It is but just to say that since the relaxation of Sunday laws, great improvements have taken place in this, in many respects, great and heroic country. "At the Scotch Synod in 1867, the Puritan Sabbath was openly proclaimed a failure, one speaker saying that continental Sabbaths produced no parallel to the disgraceful behavior that marked the day in Scotland."

Christ says: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Luke 13: 15, 17).

St. Paul says: "Let no man, then, judge ye in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath day" (Col. 2: 16).

Read your Bible through again and again, and you will each time become more convinced of the truth of the following facts:

First, that there is no divine command for the observance of Sunday as a Sabbath;

Second, Christ never changed God's Sabbath to Sunday;

Third, Christ never observed Sunday as a Sabbath;

Fourth, the Apostles never kept Sunday for the Sabbath:

Fifth, there is no prophecy that Sunday would ever take the place of the Sabbath.

But here we are, in this nineteenth century civilization, observing Sunday by command of Constantine, an imperial butcher, who deluged the Roman Empire with blood; a man who threw his captives to wild beasts, a man who killed the husband of his sister and the father of his wife; a man who tore his nephew, a boy of eleven years, from the arms of a pleading sister, and murdered him; a man who plunged his wife into a bath of boiling oil; a man who consigned to a cruel death his own innocent son.

In the *Popular Science Monthly*, of October, 1895, Dr. White shows, from the researches of such eminent Biblical scholars as Layard, Botta, Sayce, Uppert and George Smith, that it is revealed beyond the possibility of doubt that the accounts of creation, the tree of life in Eden, the institution of the Sabbath, the deluge, the tower of Babel, and much else in the Pentateuch, were simply an evolution out of earlier myths, legends and chronicles.

B. O. Flower, in the *Arena* for December, 1892, says: "This intolerant spirit has in recent years crystallized itself into an organization known as The American Sabbath Union..... It seeks to establish in this republic the odious laws of the sun-worshipping pagan Constantine, and to persecute with the ferocity of Nero all who do not believe as these narrow-minded children of paganism."

Primarily, the whole question of Sunday or Sabbath observance rests on, or rather proceeds from, the idea that the Infinite rested on the

seventh day and hallowed it. Geology and Evolution tell us that the earth came to a state of habitability after many successive stages of change, occupying perhaps millions of years. Scripture saith that the earth and all therein were created in six days, about 6,000 years ago. Christian apologists for the story of creation now say that the days of creation mean six stages, six æons or "long whiles." The Creator rested, according to scripture, on the seventh day. Was it twenty-four hours or an age? Did he who created the earth, an all-powerful, conditionless, passionless being, one who could perhaps by mere thought create a thousand worlds in the twinkling of an eye, from nothing taken from nowhere,—did he require rest? The scriptural account of the creation, to my mind, is somewhat of an absurdity, and looks as if it originated in the brain of man way back in the infancy of the world.

Take the Sunday School classes out now and again to where nature is unfolding her leaves of wonder and delight, instil into their young minds a love of the good, the true, the beautiful; of the hills, and the valleys, and the brooks that flow; of science, art, sculpture, painting, music—of all that gives to humanity a glimpse of the sublime by which we are more or less touched and elevated to a better appreciation of what should be the glorious inheritance of life. You worship, when you linger o'er the beauties of the sublunary world, listen to the laughter of little children, cause dimples of expectancy and joy to come to the face of childhood, and brighten the gloom of some one's life. A most pleasing sight was one I witnessed during a sojourn in Chicago, when the electric and cable cars ran out on Sunday to the suburbs and the parks, loaded with old and young, and their lunch baskets, away from vice and temptation—

> "Away from the passions and cares that wither life,
> And waste its little hour."

Away from the dust and heat and smoke of the city, out to where they could see the shape of a leaf, where they could feel the yielding grass beneath their feet; out amid the perfume of flowers and nature at her best; discussing with friends and acquaintances interesting events of the time, feeling for a brief moment a lightness in their hearts and a joy simply in breathing and living, the remembrance of which would perhaps give them a buoyancy that would carry them through another week's rush and whirl of toil, leading them home at evening, and to the reading room, the church, a lecture, or a concert. Can we wonder why they look forward to Sunday with such pleasurable anticipations? They do not worship on bended knee, but they fulfil the spirit of the law by trying to be happy and trying to make others so "here and now."

Enforcing Sunday laws will not ease any of the burdens of humanity; will not level up inequalities and social wrongs; will not let any more sunshine into the life of the masses, who deeply feel the need of recreation and diversion; will not promulgate the truism that "a society resting on the basis of property and not on the basis of life can never be

perfect." Man's presence here on earth makes little difference. In the words of a poet, philosopher and reformer—

"If not a human being existed on the earth to-day, the sun would rise just as brightly in the east to-morrow, and set in the sapphire islands of the west; the earth's flight would not vary; the roses and the violets would bloom; the beauty of the poem of the seasons would be just as lovely; the rainbow would arch the clouds; spring would weave again her tapestries of green; wind, wave and fire, the architects of the globe, would go on as if none were here."

And yet it would seem to many of our friends that they must stand at the throttle-valve of the universe, lest the speed of the earth might increase; must stand guard over earth's myriads, lest some fearful catastrophe should happen if innocent enjoyment were to go unchecked. Nature, aglow with life, "in the piling up of sunset clouds, in the rising stems and sweeping branches of the forest isles, in sounds of music in every note of her choral forces, that mighty gamut of creation that rises from the tiniest whisper of whirring wings in the insect world, through the sighing of the night wind, the crackle of swaying corn, the roar of falling water, and the mighty voice of the sounding sea, up to the hiss of a lightning flash and the crash of a thunder-bolt," forever proclaims to man that it is natural to satisfy the yearnings of his heart, in a temperate and consistent way, in accordance with the laws of his being. And so will Nature ever speak, as long as earth circles round the sun—that orb which is the source of all life, all movement, all growth, all energy.

Sunday, to many a weary traveller across life's dreary deserts, was an oasis of peace and contentment, happiness and beauty, a spot by the wayside, where roses look forth and give their perfume as an offering to the all-pervading light which tipped their petals with the pink of day, and for a brief moment with gratitude in his heart he has said, Oh, Sun, thou art beautiful! oh, life, thou art glorious! "Love, art thou sweet, then bitter death must be!" Close the relief valves against humanity, exceed the pressure allowed by conscience, and the electrical storms of hatred, the resistless waves of passion, will swell greater and greater, at last leaving in their wake, in the restless heaving of the wide, waste sea, the turbulent elements of human interests, and many a wreck of good intentions. Stand erect on the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture, point to the horizon of the Unknowable, and, conscious of the dignity of might, invade the sanctity of mind, thunder forth with all the vehemence of voice and nature, that others shall be forced by law to follow the dictates of any particular sect, and you will have taken a step backwards towards chaos, towards eternal night, towards the dungeon, the stake and the Inquisition. Picture with all the eloquence of language the torturing persistence of bigotry, the suffering caused by intolerance and hatred, and you will have turned a page of the book of time, you will be journeying along the road of experience that teaches the duty of happiness and discipline, the happiness of goodwill and love.

Opposition there will be to so-called Sabbath desecration ; it will be but a repetition of the old paradox that out of advancing civilization there always comes a cry against change and innovation. It was heard generations agone, when the "divines" said that the invention of the locomotive mocked God by bringing places nearer together than he intended they should be ; when medical men said that the swiftness of travelling would induce new diseases, that the smoke of the locomotive would kill the birds of the air It was heard when a wail went forth against the invention of the saw-mill ; when, as a heating apparatus, a stove was first introduced into the sacred edifice ; when the first organ was put in ; and that within the memory of "the oldest inhabitant" everywhere. It was heard when the first entertainment was held in the church ; when the electric cars were introduced ; when the truths of evolution first dawned upon the world,—a department of knowledge which is taught in many colleges to-day. Andrew D. White, L.L.D., Ph.D., in a series of articles extending over a period of two years in the *Popular Science Monthly*, has shown how superstition and theology have opposed nearly every discovery in science, nearly every discovery looking towards the mental emancipation of mankind in the past. It will be the case more or less in the years to come.

Asceticism, meaning well, would cover up the flowers in the park on Sunday, check the onward march of humanity towards a better, a happier life. But mayhap the same mysterious influences that mould public opinion may yet bring Sunday to the toiler as a day of recreation and true worship, as a herald of joy, as a blessing for men.

## TO "ONLOOKER:" A CRITICISM.

There are some men in almost every community, who, during their busy lives, find time to write for newspapers or religious weeklies. This is all right. It is not so when, through these mediums, they misrepresent, caricature and belittle the opinions of others, instead of disproving them. Their action is the result of a habit of trying to rush through life like a railroad train with a fast schedule, and not even stopping to think now and again. One of the "I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark" kind, a well-known Doctor of Divinity writing under the cognomen of "Onlooker" for the Brantford *Expositor*, has made two or three mis-statements which I desire to criticise.

First, the commandment that "Thou shalt not rob workmen of their day of rest, with a few others, appear to work wondrously well in uplifting humanity." It may appear so through "Onlooker's" "distorted vision," but to many others these seem to work very ineffectually ; especially so to those who through the columns of newspapers have become familiar with the murders, atrocities, cruelties to children, robberies, the encroachment of monopolies and trusts, the exhibitions of depravity and

ignorance where life is a terrible struggle for existence. Many smile at the ignorant and the innocent, are disgusted with exhibitions of animalism and vice of all descriptions, pride themselves on their education, their money-making ability, on the distance to which they are removed from the poor creatures who excite their pity and sympathy, but do not consider that the inexorable law of fate that placed them where they are has been the cause also of appointing to their status and station in this life those supposedly beneath them. They do not remember that superstition, dogma, the unequal distribution of wealth, opportunities and knowledge are the causes, for the most part, of such a state. Efforts are made to straighten the thousand and one misshapen twigs of the tree of life, but seldom do reformers go below the surface of human frailty down to the roots of crime. In fact, men give more attention to the breeding of horses and cattle than to the creation of men and the development of mind and body. Superstition, religious fanaticism, and prudery prohibit the diffusion, by teachers specially trained for the purpose, of physiological knowledge with reference to the sacred use of reproductive functions. The young are kept in fatal ignorance of the most vital question affecting any possible realization of a perfect humanity. They are kept in ignorance of the stimulating and debasing influence of certain foods, drinks and habits, which leave their marks upon humanity in the form of individuals with certain instincts or traits so abnormally developed at the expense of others, that they are continually tossed on the resistless sea of human passion.

As long as human nature remains as it is, reformative schemes, religions, etc., will be more or less futile. There is as much of what is called "wickedness" in the world to-day as there was a thousand years ago, perhaps more. Pressure of population in those sinks of iniquities, the cities; the fact that thousands not only live, but grow rich on the labor of others; and that the wealth of the nation, the wealth of the community, is locked up in the hands of a few, are the causes for the most part of poverty, ignorance, and crime. Poverty means a struggle for existence; a fight for life means a lack of opportunities to acquire knowledge—means more or less ignorance and crime. A lack of knowledge of the laws of life and health, of heredity, etc., means a repetition of the abnormal, a repetition of criminal tendencies in human beings. Knowledge of nature's laws tends to an observance of cause and effect, to an observance of the inevitable consequences of wrong action; towards happiness and the avoidance of evil. Ignorance of natural law means more or less suffering. Food, climate, thought, environment, habits, natural or unnatural, modify or accentuate, but do not obliterate the traits of men. Moralists and reformers commence at the wrong period of life to reform men. They should go back, or rather look forward several generations. When a life has made its appearance, it is diminutive but nearly finished. Education and experience or environment complete it. It may be likened to a bud, with its leaves, its characteristics as yet unfolded, but it is there in embryo, in perfect miniature,

only waiting to be touched by the lights and shades, the colorings, of life.

"The millennium of purity and happiness will never reach this earth until pre-natal laws are justly observed."—(Cowan, M.D.) An observance of such laws as set forth and elaborated in current literature, in the leading reformative and scientific reviews, means to many "a new time, a better race, a new world." If a man's characteristics are such that he is good and does good consciously or unconsciously, he will be one of nature's noblemen, whether he is a pagan or a Christian. If a man is so constituted that he is tyrannical and despotic, cruel and selfish, he will be more or less of a savage, whether he is a heathen or a clergyman. Creeds and religions will never entirely eradicate inherited traits of character or weaknesses in a man. "Know that, in human history, no depraved or vicious human organization ever reformed itself, because complete reform would of necessity extend through several generations." O woman, thou whom nature intended to be the crowning creation of the Infinite, most beautiful creature in the universe, to you is entrusted this sublime gift of creation, the production of happy, beautiful, perfect beings. Who should not help thee by word, deed, thought or action; by stimulating a love of all that is good and just, of kindness and affection, of the arts and sciences, of all that ennobles and broadens the mind of man and conduces to his physical well-being?

How different is the reality as we look out over the world to-day. Nowhere do we see sentient beings getting so low as in Christendom; hundreds of thousands of girl lives, whose daily example should be a visible expression of all that is sweet and womanly, forced down to the uttermost depths of degradation and shame by the gaunt spectre of starvation, by a struggle for life in large cities, by the thoughtlessness, the cruelties, the animalisms of men; lives whose endings are "tragedies as sad and deep and dark as can be woven by the warp and woof of mystery and death."

Nowhere in savagery does such a state exist, nowhere in heathen climes do human beings get so low. It is true, they worship idols and wage wars of extermination; but so do *civiiized* nations. Can we, in view of the above, speak of the effectiveness, the blessedness of civilization and Christianity, and not utter something that is misleading? Foreign missions are maintained at an enormous expense. It is estimated that it costs $500 to convert a heathen. Five hundred dollars a head! and, after all, you do not take away his savage instincts. Would it not be more consistent to try and better the condition of those of whom I have spoken? Attempt to reach a better standard of civilization here on this continent before wasting efforts elsewhere.

*Second mis-statement.* "The strongest intellects of our age, the most gifted in literature and science, pay their homage to the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture." The above assertion shows either a lack of knowledge with reference to this matter, or a deliberate perversion of

the truth. Even if it were so, paying homage is not demonstrating a truth or proving an assertion to be a fact. The " strongest intellects of our age " have put it on record that they have a more civilized, a more reasonable, and a more reverent conception of the Eternal than that of the ancients, as pictured for us by old-time writers said to be inspired.

*Third mis-statement.* " This prince of modern blasphemers vulgarly abuses Christianity." Wrong again, Doctor. Ingersoll has not in his lectures stooped to the vulgarity of abuse. In his controversies with such men as the Right Hon. W. E Gladstone and the Rev. Dr. Field (Scotch Presbyterian), in the *North American Review*, he has shown himself to be scholarly, gentlemanly, argumentative and logical. Dr. Field, in an open letter, said to him :

" I am glad to know you, even though some of my brethren look upon you as a monster, because of your unbelief. I shall never forget the long evening I spent at your home in Washington."

Some enterprising individual is publishing, with refutations, a vast number of falsehoods about Ingersoll which he has collected,—lies of all kinds, mostly the utterances of clergymen, which for illustration of malevolence, hatred, and total depravity have never been equalled—statements which have been proved to be false time and time again.

Is it unreasonable to say that the commandment, " Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," does not appear to work over well even among clergymen ? Is it unreasonable to ask that preachers should cease uttering " blasphemies " by vilifying unbelievers, and look around for facts and arguments ?

Complaint is often made that Ingersoll lectures for money, but no mention is made of the fact that he gives away in charity from $25,000 to $40,000 a year.

*Fourth mis-statement.* " Ingersoll has often vilified the name of Christ." Now, while I do not wish to pose as a defender of one so well able to answer calumny as Ingersoll, I would say that " there is nothing grander than to rescue from the leprosy of slander the reputation of a great and splendid man." The Rev. Minot J. Savage, in an eloquent sermon in defence of Col. Ingersoll for the good which he is doing, said of him : " He does not believe in the theological Christ, yet he has uttered a tender, admiring tribute to Jesus, isolated, rejected, cast out by the same kind of bigotry whose sting has been felt in his own heart." " There is nothing which touches the interests of men that does not find an echo in his heart and brain." " I do not know anywhere in the world finer and grander teaching than his concerning liberty, justice, patriotism, the character and possibilities of woman and the beauties of home." " There are passages in his writings and his utterances which show a worship for all that is highest and noblest in human life ; for every consecration to duty in the midst of difficulty, darkness and sorrow."

In another article "Onlooker" abuses, condemns, and judges most harshly men who have expressed themselves honestly and freely. The same talented writer from whom I have quoted, in shortly afterwards lecturing on Robert Burns, said, "We must not judge and condemn Robert Burns because of his unbelief; we must leave that to a higher power." If this will apply to Burns, why not to Ingersoll also? It would seem that consistency, in the estimation of "Onlooker," is not a jewel.

Apart from the above, the assertion that man should not judge man in matters of faith or lack of faith, but should leave it to the Infinite, is one of the most sensible thoughts ever uttered by a clergyman. If it had been acted upon in the past, pagans would not have persecuted Christians, the early Christians would not have persecuted, tortured and burned at the stake those who were a little more advanced in their ideas than themselves. These again in the years gone by would not have persecuted Agnostics, Freethinkers, and Atheists, the astronomers and scientists of the age in which they lived. It would not have become a part of history that "The ashes of those consumed at the stake would almost fertilize continents" If it had been observed in the past, it would not have become a matter of history that that murderer Calvin (the founder of the Presbyterian Church) caused Servetus to be burned with a slow fire at the stake. Infinite cruelty; outrage unspeakable! and for what reason? Because Servetus said "Son of the Eternal God" while he (Calvin) insisted on "Eternal Son of God," implying the colossal absurdity that a son could be as old as his father!

If this sensible idea had been observed, monasteries would never have existed; asceticism would never have flourished, the darkness and persecution of the Middle Ages would never have occurred. Universities, schools, and observatories would have been founded, instead of tabernacles for the propagation of superstition. We would have been hundreds of years further advanced towards the millennium of happiness and purity. The thought that "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn" would never have been given to the world. There would have been no bloodshed for religion's sake, perhaps no wars. "Onlooker" would not have started in to reform the community by "vilifying" Ingersoll and Richardson. After all that may be said, such writing as "Onlooker's" may be *overlooked*, as being caused by the frailties of human nature, with which even clergymen are touched; for none are infallible; all make mistakes, from His Eminence the Pope down.

"Humanity is an army on the march; where the vanguard is to-day, there the main body will be to-morrow; find out what the best thinkers of any age are dreaming, and you will have what will be the common thought of the next age." (Rev. Minot J. Savage). "Blasphemy is what a last year's leaf says to a this year's bud." (Ingersoll). Many "men of the cloth" (though not all) plod along in the old paths seemingly forgetful of the new time, of the springing up of new truths; we would respectfully suggest to them that they preach a little more of the

religion of humanity and a little less of the religion of dogma and creed; we would suggest to them that they turn their churches into lecture auditoriums for the dissemination of knowledge, into halls of science and music, into halls for social enjoyment, where happy crowds will be found on Sundays chasing away, in jollity and mirth and profitable pastimes and discussions, the fleeting hours of life. We would ask them to teach that a god who will burn a soul forever in another world is worse than a Christian who will burn a body for a few hours in this. Teach that it is blasphemy to say that an Infinite Being will punish for all time to come one who honestly doubts another man's creed. Teach that the story of the torture house is a myth that came from the midnight of the past, when our race was young, and men were ignorant of the causes of natural phenomena. Teach that

> The hour is coming when men's Holy Church
> Shall melt away in ever widening walls,
> And be for all mankind,
> And in its place a mightier church shall come,
> Whose covenant word shall be the deeds of love,
> Not *credo* then.
> *Amo*, shall be the pass-word through its gates,
> Man will not ask his brother any more,
> "Believest thou?" but, "Lovest thou?"

Proclaim from the pulpit, in the words of Robert G. Ingersoll,

"That for thousands of years men have been writing the real bible, and it is being written from day to day, and it will never be finished while man has life." "All the facts that we know, all the truly recorded events, all the discoveries and inventions, all the wonderful machines, whose wheels and levers seem to think, all the poems, crystals from the brain, flowers from the heart, all the songs of love and joy, of smiles and tears, the great dramas of Imagination's world, the wondrous paintings, miracles of form and color, of light and shade, the marvellous marvels that seem to live and breathe, the secrets told by rock and star, by dust and flower, by rain and snow, by frost and flame, by winding stream and desert sand, by mountain waves and billowed sea, all the wisdom that lengthens and ennobles life, all that avoids or cures disease or conquers pain, all just and perfect laws and rules that guide and shape our lives; all thoughts that feed the flames of love, the music that transfigures, enraptures and enthralls, the victories of heart and brain, the miracles that hands have wrought, the deft and cunning hands of those who worked for wife and child, the histories of noble deeds, of brave and useful men, of faithful loving wives, of quenchless mother-love, of conflicts for the right of sufferings for the truth, of all the best that all the men and women of the world have said and thought and done through all the years; these treasures of heart and brain; these are the sacred scriptures of the human race."

Since writing the above, we have noticed an item referring to the People's Church in the west, which has been in existence for some time. It is said that this church is as absolutely unsectarian in fact as it is in name; that it leaves each person free to choose his own religious belief while seeking to unite all upon lines of endeavor after right living, holding that the truest religious faith must grow out of the most faithful life. The following is the simple "Bond of Union," signing which constitutes one a member of the People's Church:

"Earnestly desiring to develope in ourselves and in the world honest and reverent thought, faithfulness to our highest conception of right living, and the spirit of love and service to our fellow men, we join ourselves together, hoping to help one another in all good things, and to advance the cause of pure and practical religion in the community, basing our union upon no creedal test, but upon the purpose herein expressed, and welcoming all who wish to join us to help establish truth, righteousness and love in the world."

Of this church, Colonel Ingersoll has said:

"This church has no creed; all are welcome, whatever their belief may be; the doors are open to Jews, infidels, agnostics, atheists, and even to orthodox Christians. The object of this church is to make people better, kinder and nearer, just by developing the brain and civilizing the heart. This church is a character-builder; it wants to do something for this world: to help the poor, educate the ignorant, and do away with crime. This church building is open all the week; there is a kindergarten, where sixty poor children are taught, and are given a dinner every day; there is also a gymnasium for girls and boys, a good kitchen, and rooms for parties and concerts. The auditorium is beautiful, it will seat six or seven hundred, and there is a fine organ. Miss Bartlett, the pastor, is a remarkable person. She has intelligence of the highest order, great industry, and that divine thing called enthusiasm. I like that church."

It will now be in order for some Rip Van Winkle to arise from his nap amid the Thirty-nine Articles and gravely inform his readers in dust-whirls of verbiage that another congregation of "asses with itching ears" has been discovered. I for one earnestly hope that it will become the church of the future, and I feel like prophesying that it will be.

The great world-puzzle, the mysteries of time and space, has given rise to hundreds of religious beliefs. Confucianism. Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, may be mentioned as the four most prominent. Mohammedans apply the epithet "dogs of infidels" to Christians; Christians, in their turn, dub unbelievers and agnostics "blasphemers." The meaning of blasphemy, to my mind, is to defame, blacken and vilify the character of any man who honestly doubts the dogmas of any religion, and it is high time Christians should observe this, and cease confounding unbelief with total depravity. Intolerance is not yet extinct. "There is no religious person who, according to his

temperament," says Messelier, "does not hate, despise or pity the adherents of a sect different from his own." Here are a few illustrations:

The *Western Watchman* (Roman Catholic) says: "Protestantism we would hang, draw and quarter; we would impale and hang it up for crows' nests; we would tear it with pincers and fire it with hot irons; we would fill it with lead and sink it in hell-fire one hundred fathoms deep."

The *Methodist Recorder* says: "Agnosticism! it is as ignominious as the atheism of Democritus; it is more harmful than the idolatry of the Israelites, and more self-deteriorating than the profane impulses of the lowest profligate."

The expulsion of Prof Mitchell from the chair of Geology at Vanderbilt University because he believed that man existed on the earth before the period assigned to Adam; of Prof. Woodrow from the chair of Natural Science in the Theological Seminary at Columbia, S.C., because he believed in evolution; of Prof. Alexander from the State University of South Carolina, because he was unable to comprehend how three persons made one person or one God; of many others because they believed in the latest scientific discoveries, are instances of intolerance which cause us to think of the fanaticism of the 15th century. Listen to these words of Talmage:

"Ah, Infidelity, stand up and take thy sentence, in the presence of God and angels and men; stand up, thou monster, thy lip blasted by blasphemy, thy cheek scarred with lust, thy breath foul with the corruption of the ages; stand up, satyr, filthy goat, buzzard of the nations, leper of the centuries; stand up, thou monster, Infidelity; part man, part panther, part reptile, part dragon, stand up and take thy sentence. Thy hands are red in the blood in which thou hast washed; thy feet crimson with the human gore through which thou hast waded; stand up and take thy sentence. Down with thee to the pit, and sup on the sobs and groans of families thou hast blasted, and roll on the bed of knives which thou hast sharpened for others, and let thy music be the everlasting miserere of those whom thou hast damned."

The above are a few quotations taken from a multitude, all breathing the same fierce hatred. Compare them with the following, taken from Tyndall's lecture on Man:

"If I wish to find men who are scrupulous in their adherence to engagements, whose words are their bond, and to whom moral thriftiness of any kind is subjectively unknown. If I wanted a loving father, a faithful husband, an honorable neighbor and a just citizen, I should seek him and find him in the band of atheists to which I refer. I have known some of the most pronounced among them, not only in life but in death, seen them approaching with open eyes the inexorable goal, with no dread of a hangman's whip, with no hope of a heavenly crown, and still as mindful of their duties and as

faithful in the discharge of them as if the eternal future depended upon their later deeds."

The first of these (Talmage) speaks but to tickle the senses of those who listen to him; the second, with a fervent love of truth, endeavors to rescue from "the leprosy of slander," the characters of good and faithful men. This mystery of life, the unknowable, this little gleam of consciousness, where we listen to the sound of the dash and the plunge of the ocean of the eternal, has filled mankind with feelings of awe and reverence, has filled minds with conjecture and thought, which perhaps has not been entirely fruitless:

"For we have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And we have felt
A Presence that disturbs us with a joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

"The solemn stars shining in the infinite abysses are the eternal witnesses of its truth."


# Secular Thought.

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